

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Final Report**  
**Pennsylvania Child and Family Services Review**

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) assesses State performance during a specified time period with respect to seven child welfare outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being and with respect to seven systemic factors. The Pennsylvania CFSR was conducted the week of August 26, 2002. The Final Report is based on information from the following sources:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF);
- The State Data Profile prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Reviews of 50 cases from three counties in the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three counties and the State capital) with a wide range of stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, various levels of State and local OCYF personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, judges, and attorneys.

A key CFSR finding was that the State is effective in its efforts to prevent maltreatment recurrence. The State data for 2000 met the national standards with respect to the incidence of maltreatment recurrence and the incidence of maltreatment of children in foster care. In addition, the CFSR case reviews revealed a low incidence of maltreatment recurrence. However, the State was not as consistently effective in initiating responses to child maltreatment reports in a timely manner, particularly with regard to establishing face-to-face contact with the child victim.

The CFSR case reviews also identified two other strengths for the State -- ensuring that siblings in foster care are placed together and that the physical and dental health needs of children are adequately addressed.

Despite these strengths, Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with six of the seven safety, permanency, or well-being outcomes. A primary concern pertained to the State’s effectiveness in ensuring that children in foster care have permanency and stability in their living situations (Permanency Outcome 1). The case reviews found that OCYF was not consistently effective with regard to the following:

- Establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner (item 7);
- Making diligent efforts to achieve timely permanency through adoption, reunification, permanent placement with relatives, guardianship, or other planned permanent living arrangement (items 8, 9, and 10); and
- Preventing re-entry into foster care (item 5).

The CFSR findings also indicated that OCYF was not consistent in making diligent efforts to ensure that the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children in foster care (Permanency Outcome 2). The case reviews found that in 47 percent of the cases reviewed, OCYF did not explore relatives as possible placement resources or did not give consideration to relatives who requested that children be placed with them. In addition, in more than one-third of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings. Finally, in 33 percent of applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF did not provide adequate services to support or strengthen the parent-child relationships of children in foster care.

Another area of concern pertained to the State's effectiveness in ensuring that families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs (Well-Being Outcome 1). According to the case review findings, in 32 percent of the cases, OCYF did not adequately address the service needs of children and parents (item 17); in 23 percent of the cases, OCYF did not appropriately involve parents and children in the case planning process (item 18). In addition, the frequency and quality of face-to-face contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads often was insufficient to monitor children's safety or promote attainment of case goals (items 19 and 20).

With regard to the seven systemic factors, the CFSR findings were that the State is in substantial conformity with factors related to the statewide information system; quality assurance; training; service array; agency responsiveness to the community; and foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention. However, the State was not in substantial conformity with factors pertaining to the case review system. The key concerns pertaining to this factor were that OCYF was not consistent in its efforts to involving parents and children in case planning; and that there were too many impediments, both at the agency and court levels, to attaining TPR in a timely manner. The following is a summary of the CFSR findings regarding specific outcomes and systemic factors.

## **KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES**

### **I. SAFETY**

***Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.***

#### **Status of Safety Outcome S1 – Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania achieved substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- 92.7 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as having substantially achieved this outcome, which exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State met the national standard for the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period, and the national standard for the percentage of children maltreated in foster care. The State data pertaining to maltreatment recurrence is difficult to interpret because it does not include the majority of child neglect incidents. In Pennsylvania, most reports pertaining to child neglect are classified as General Protective Services cases and not Child Protective Services cases, and therefore, they are not reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). NCANDS is the data system that collects child maltreatment data for the Federal government and data from this system are used to compute the outcome measure pertaining to child maltreatment recurrence.

### **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Reviewers found that the agency had initiated investigations of reports of child maltreatment in a timely manner in 83 percent of the 12 applicable cases. However, in 17 percent of applicable cases, responses to reports of child maltreatment did not occur in accordance with established timeframes. Although the agency responded quickly and appropriately in the majority of instances, there were two cases in which face-to-face contact with the child did not meet agency timeframes.

### **Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the following findings:

- In 97 percent of the 39 applicable cases, there was no recurrence of maltreatment. The data from the State Data Profile indicate that the State's incidence of repeat maltreatment for 2000 was 3.5 percent, which meets the national standard of 6.1 percent. However, the rate of maltreatment recurrence reported in the State Data Profile includes only those cases classified as Child Protective Services cases. In Pennsylvania, there are two components to protective services, Child Protective Services (CPS) and General Protective Services (GPS). CPS covers cases involving non-accidental injuries or conditions, including serious physical injury, serious physical neglect, sexual abuse, and serious mental injury. GPS covers cases "not rising to the level of child abuse," including less serious injuries or neglect, environmental concerns, lack of supervision, and cases involving the behavior of children. GPS reports are not maintained in the statewide central registry and are not reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (which computes the maltreatment recurrence rate). Consequently, the rate of recurrence of substantiated incidents resulting from GPS investigations is not known.

***Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.***

**Status of Safety Outcome S2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that this outcome was substantially achieved in 82.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

Although Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity on this outcome, reviewers determined that in 85 percent of the cases, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to children in their own homes and to ensure that the risk of harm to children was adequately addressed. Both case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that, for the most part, OCYF uses an array of individualized services, particularly in-home services, to prevent placement and reduce risk of harm. However, the case reviews also indicated that these services are not used as consistently as necessary to ensure safety for all children.

**Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the 27 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to maintain children safely in their homes. However, in 15 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to provide services to ensure children's safety while preventing their placement in foster care. A key finding was that although OCYF has access to a wide variety of placement prevention services, the agency is not consistent in its efforts to provide these services to families or to provide services at the level of duration and intensity that is needed by many families.

**Item 4. Risk of harm to child**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the 41 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made sufficient efforts to reduce the risk of harm to children. However, in 15 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF was not consistently effective in its efforts to reduce risk of harm to children. The key concerns identified pertained to a lack of monitoring of families to ensure that they were receiving or participating in services intended to address the risk of harm issues. According to the Statewide Assessment, private providers surveyed as part of the State's self-assessment process reported that although the initial risk assessment process is valid, the process of assessing risk on an ongoing basis needs to be improved.

## II. PERMANENCY

*Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.*

### **Status of Permanency Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 48.0 percent of cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicated that for fiscal year 2000, the State did not meet the national standards for (1) the rate of foster care re-entries, (2) the percentage of children achieving reunification within 12 months of entry into foster care, (3) the percentage of children discharged to finalized adoptions within 24 months of entry into foster care, or (4) the percentage of children in foster care for 12 months or less who experienced no more than 2 placements.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that improvements are being made in the State's permanency planning efforts. They noted that efforts such as permanency roundtables, adoption review committees, and intensive reunification programs are designed to enhance the State's capacity to achieve permanency outcomes in a timely manner. However, based on the findings of the case review process, all items assessed for Permanency Outcome 1 received a rating of Area Needing Improvement. The most significant concerns identified pertained to a lack of consistency in the agency's efforts to establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner and achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner.

### **Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the following:

- In 33 percent of the 6 applicable cases, a re-entry into foster care occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode.
- The data reported in the State Data Profile indicate that the rate of re-entry into foster care within 12 months is 20.1 percent, which does not meet the national standard of 8.6 percent.

According to the Statewide Assessment, children between the ages of 10 and 13 are more likely to experience a re-entry into foster care than are younger children and children age 14 to 17.

**Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although in 88 percent of the 25 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made diligent efforts to ensure children's placement stability while in foster care, this was not consistent with the State data. Data from the State Data Profile indicate that in fiscal year 2000, 85.2 percent of children in foster care for 12 months or less had no more than two placement settings, which does not meet the national standard of 86.7 percent. The State Data Profile and the case review process assess placement stability using different measures, and it is necessary for both of them to meet standards or acceptable criteria for this item to be rated as a Strength.

**Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the 25 applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had established appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner. However, concerns were identified regarding this issue in 32 percent of foster care cases. Although the case review findings and stakeholder comments indicate that children's permanency goals are reviewed on a regular basis, the reviews do not always result in a reconsideration of permanency goals or in the filing of termination of parental rights petitions in a timely manner.

**Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the following:

- In 67 percent of the 12 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner. However, in 33 percent of applicable cases reviewers determined that OCYF had not made concerted efforts to achieve these permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Data from the State Data Profile indicate that the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care (69.7%) does not meet the national standard of 76.2 percent.

**Item 9. Adoption**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the following:

- In 43 percent of the 7 applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had made diligent efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. However, in 57 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had not made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner.
- Data from the State Data Profile indicate that the State's percentage of finalized adoptions in FY 2000 that occurred within 24 months of removal from home (19.1%) does not meet the national standard of 32.0 percent.

According to stakeholders, delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner may be attributed to delays in (1) changing goals from reunification to adoption, (2) filing for TPR, (3) searching for absent parents, and (4) conducting home studies. They also identified court-related barriers pertaining to the time to achieve TPR when there are appeals, and the difficulty of scheduling hearings in a timely manner due to crowded court dockets. According to the Statewide Assessment, variation in the financial and health care benefits that are available to adopting families is a barrier to timely adoptions.

**Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement**

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67 percent of the 6 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assist children in attaining the goal of emancipation. However, in 33 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to ensure permanency for children with regard to alternative living options.

***Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.***

**Status of Permanency Outcome 2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 60.0 percent of the 25 foster care cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Although Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome, the case reviews found that the agency made concerted efforts to keep siblings together while in foster care. However, the case reviews also found that OCYF was less effective in placing children in close proximity to their families of origin, and particularly in placing children with relatives. Another area of concern identified by both stakeholders and reviewers was a lack of consistency in agency efforts to locate and involve absent fathers in the lives of their children. In addition, in more than one-third of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings.

**Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the 20 applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had made diligent efforts to ensure that children's foster care placements were in close proximity to their parents or relatives. However, in 20 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not been effective in placing children in proximity to their parents and relatives.

**Item 12. Placement with siblings**

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 88 percent of the 16 applicable cases, siblings were placed together, or their separation was deemed necessary to meet the needs of one or more of the children.

**Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although in 63 percent of the 19 applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had made concerted efforts to facilitate visitation, in 37 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had not made concerted efforts to facilitate visitation with parents and siblings.

**Item 14. Preserving connections**

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the 25 foster care cases, reviewers determined that OCYF made diligent efforts to preserve children's connections. However, in 20 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children's connections to extended biological family and/or to their heritage and faith had not been preserved in foster care.

**Item 15. Relative placement**

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 53 percent of the 19 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This was reflected in cases in which relatives were considered as placement resources early in the case and appropriate assessments were conducted. However, in 47 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that OCYF had not made diligent efforts to seek relatives as possible placement resources.

**Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67 percent of the 18 applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF made efforts to support the parent-child relationship of children in foster care. However, concerns related to this issue were identified in 33 percent of applicable cases. A key concern pertained to an inconsistency in the agency regarding efforts to locate and involve absent fathers in their children's lives.

**III. WELL-BEING**

*Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.*

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity**



Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved for 64.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

A general CFSR finding was that OCYF is not consistent in meeting the service needs of children and families or in involving parents and children in the case planning process. In addition, concerns were identified regarding the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with children and parents in their caseloads. Although caseworkers were more likely to maintain sufficient contact with children than with parents, reviewers noted that the frequency and quality of contacts was not always sufficient to ensure children's safety and well-being or to promote attainment of case goals. A key finding is that all of these problems were more likely to occur in the in-home services cases than in the foster care cases.

**Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the 50 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the needs and services of children, parents, and/or foster parents had been, or were being, adequately addressed by OCYF. However, in 32 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that OCYF was not adequately addressing the needs and services of children and parents, although the agency was effective in meeting the needs of foster parents. According to the Statewide Assessment, frontline caseworkers participating in focus groups (conducted as part of the State's self-assessment) indicated that the coordination with private providers of service delivery to families at the local level is an area needing improvement. These focus group participants suggested that more extensive coordination and communication between caseworkers and private providers is needed to ensure effective service delivery.

**Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77 percent of the 48 applicable case records, reviewers determined that OCYF appropriately involved parents or children in the case planning process. However, in 23 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that parents and/or children had not been appropriately involved in the case planning process. A key finding is that this problem pertained primarily to in-home services cases. Only one foster care case was assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement for this item.

**Item 19. Worker visits with child**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 84 percent of the 50 applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency of caseworker visits with children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of children's safety or to otherwise meet their needs. However, in 16 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with

children was not sufficient to monitor children's safety or to promote attainment of case goals. Reviewers observed that contracted service providers generally met or exceeded the required number of visits, but the frequency of caseworker visits was not always consistent with agency policy, particularly for the in-home services cases.

**Item 20. Worker visits with parents**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 68 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that visits with parents were sufficiently frequent or of adequate quality to promote the safety and well-being of the child and enhance attainment of case goals. However, in 33 percent of cases, reviewers determined that visits were not of sufficient frequency or adequate quality. A primary concern identified was an inconsistency with regard to agency efforts to contact fathers, even in cases in which fathers had been caretakers and/or maintained connections with the children. For the most part, reviewers found that the frequency of caseworker contacts with parents in foster care cases was more appropriate than the frequency of contacts with parents in the in-home services cases. However, when in-home services cases were managed by contracted providers, reviewers noted that staff from the contractor agency established contacts with parents on a frequent basis.

*Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.*

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 based on the finding that 86.4 percent of the cases reviewed were found to have substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Although Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome, the general CFSR finding was that in a large percentage of cases, the agency was consistent in assessing children's educational needs and providing appropriate services to meet those needs. However, in some cases, although educational needs were assessed, services were not provided to meet identified needs.

**Item 21. Educational needs of the child.**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that OCYF was effective in meeting children's educational needs. However, in 14 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the educational needs of children were not effectively or appropriately addressed.

***Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.***

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 3 - Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 78.3 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

In general, the CFSR process found that OCYF was effective in meeting children's physical health needs, but was less consistent in its efforts to address children's mental health needs. A key concern identified was that mental health services were not always of sufficient intensity and duration to meet the children's needs. In addition, in some in-home services cases, children did not receive adequate monitoring to ensure that recommended mental health services were actually received.

**Item 22. Physical health of the child**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF was adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. Overall, medical and dental services were accessible, services were provided, and documentation was thorough. A key problem identified concerned the availability of dental providers and the ability of children to access dental services.

**Item 23. Mental health of the child**

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that OCYF adequately addressed children's mental health needs. However, in 17 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that mental health needs were not being addressed, either because mental health service needs were not assessed or needed services were not provided. Stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that there are insufficient mental health services available to families.

**KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

**IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Status of Statewide Information System – Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with this factor.

**Item 24. The State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.**

Item 24 was rated as a Strength because, although Pennsylvania does not have a Statewide Information System, the existing system does permit the State to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care. However, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the available systems are cumbersome, slow, and fragmented. They noted that there is a need for more general access to the data and staff training on entering the data.

## **V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

### **Status of Case Review System – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

**Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.**

Item 25 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The on-site review found that although policy requires workers to involve parents and children in case planning, this is not occurring consistently in all cases. Reviewers found that parents and children were involved in case planning in only 77 percent of the cases reviewed. The case review process revealed that parent and child involvement in case planning occurred far more often in the foster care cases than it did in the in-home services cases.

**Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.**

Item 26 was rated as a Strength because stakeholders in all three counties reported that judicial reviews occur every 6 months and sometimes more often. These reviews fulfill both the requirements of the periodic review and the permanency hearing.

**Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.**

Item 27 was rated as a Strength because stakeholder interviews involving judges, masters, Philadelphia child welfare agency attorneys, and caseworkers reported that permanency hearings occur within 12 months of children entering foster care and during judicial reviews every 6 months.

**Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.**

Item 28 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because there are a variety of delays in achieving TPR, including routine continuances and lengthy appeals to TPR. The lack of Guardians Ad Litem and attorneys also impedes the TPR process.

**Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.**

Item 29 is rated as a Strength because there is a process in place for foster parents, relatives, and pre-adoptive parents to be notified of hearings and reviews and to be heard in these hearings and reviews.

## **VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

### **Status of Quality Assurance System-Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the factor of Quality Assurance System. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

**Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.**

Item 30 was rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided with quality services to address their needs. According to the Statewide Assessment, in January 2000, OCYF issued *Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice*. These standards address all aspects of casework process: assessment, service planning, service delivery, case monitoring and evaluation, and agency administration. Each standard identifies applicable knowledge and values, measurable benchmarks, and implementation strategies.

**Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.**

Item 31 was assigned a rating of Strength because the results of the Statewide Assessment and the on-site review show that the State has a number of mechanisms to monitor the quality of services and to identify system strengths and needs. These include the annual licensing of counties, the Needs Based Budgeting process, the Child Welfare Practice Standards, and the individual county quality assurance systems.

## **VII. TRAINING**

### **Status of Training-Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

#### **Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.**

Item 32 was rated as a Strength because the State has in place a comprehensive staff development and training program that requires that new workers complete 120 hours of competency-based training.

#### **Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.**

Item 33 was rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania provides a comprehensive and mandatory ongoing staff training program. According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires that county caseworkers complete 20 hours of training annually to maintain their certification. Some counties require more than 20 hours of additional training. To assess staff needs for ongoing training, the training program utilizes the Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNA) tool.

#### **Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.**

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania provides appropriate training for current and prospective foster and adoptive parents. According to the Statewide Assessment, Pennsylvania requires foster parents to participate in a minimum of 6 hours of pre-service training. During the on-site review, it was learned that the 6-hour requirement for foster and adoptive parent pre-service training is a minimum and most counties provide much more training to prospective foster and adoptive parents.

## VIII. SERVICE ARRAY

### **Status of Service Array-Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of service array. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

**Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.**

Item 35 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania has a wide array of services that assess the needs of families and provide the appropriate services to meet those needs. The on-site review in all counties identified a “rich and strong array” of services available to meet the needs of families. It also was noted that many of these services are community-based and focus on prevention. There is a strong collaboration with private providers and a strong collaboration at the State level helping the agency move toward a seamless system of services for families.

**Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP.**

Item 36 is rated as a Strength because, although there are some differences in the services available in each county, the State’s required array of services are generally accessible to all families in all locations of the State. All three sites reviewed confirmed through stakeholder interviews and case reviews that there is good access to services and that services are readily available.

**Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.**

Item 37 was assigned a rating of Strength because services available to families in Pennsylvania are individualized to meet the needs of the particular family. Most stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that the agency tailors services to meet the individual needs of families in foster care and in-home cases.

## **IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

### **Status of Agency Responsiveness To The Community- Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this outcome are presented below.

**Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.**

Item 38 was assigned a rating of Strength because Pennsylvania has a strong working relationship with consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other stakeholders. According to the Statewide Assessment, OCYF engages external stakeholders through invitations to meetings, public hearings, and inclusion in program and practice-setting work groups. Individual counties have procedures in place to engage their immediate communities through a variety of avenues, such as child welfare advisory boards, community meetings, liaisons with foster parent associations, and town meetings.

**Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered.**

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because Pennsylvania utilizes community stakeholders in evaluating services and developing annual reports of the State's progress in child welfare.

**Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.**

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the Department of Public Welfare, as well as the county offices, have worked diligently to build partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders to coordinate services that serve children and families throughout the State. Stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that the agency has been assertive about reaching out to other Federally-funded programs to coordinate services.

## **X. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION**

### **Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention- Substantial Conformity**

Pennsylvania is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this outcome are presented below.



**Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.**

Item 41 was assigned a rating of Strength because Pennsylvania has in place a set of comprehensive standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are routinely monitored for compliance.

**Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.**

Item 42 was assigned a rating of Strength because Pennsylvania applies the standards for foster family homes and child care institutions uniformly. Stakeholders reported that standards and training are the same for both relative and non-relative foster families. All foster homes and institutions are licensed and approved, and foster homes are reviewed annually.

**Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.**

Item 43 was rated as a Strength because all foster and adoptive parent applicants must submit criminal background checks through the State Police. FBI checks must be submitted by families that have resided out of the State. In addition, all applicants must go through a child abuse history clearance.

**Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.**

Item 44 was assigned a rating of Strength because the State employs various methods to recruit a diverse pool of foster and adoptive families. Some of the methods used by the public and private agencies to recruit foster and adoptive parents include the Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN); One Church One Child programs; special local events; the Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association Initiative; and specific campaigns to recruit African-American and Hispanic families.

**Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.**

Item 45 was assigned a rating of Strength because Pennsylvania uses its Statewide Adoption Network to facilitate cross-jurisdictional adoption. Stakeholders reported that the State is effective in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for children. Children are listed on county, State, and national adoption exchanges. Booklets are also distributed featuring children needing adoptive homes.

## Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Pennsylvania. The CFSR was conducted the week of August 26, 2002. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF);
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services providing child welfare data for the year 2000;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites throughout the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, judges, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 50 cases reviewed are the following:

- 24 cases were reviewed in Philadelphia County, 14 in Montgomery County, and 12 in Lancaster County.
- All 50 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 25 of the cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 25 were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained in their homes).
- In 30 of the cases, all children in the family were African American; in 12 cases, all children in the family were white; in 6 cases, all children in the family were Hispanic; and in 2 cases, children were of two or more races.
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case was the following:
  - Physical abuse – 8 cases (16%)
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 8 cases (16%)
  - Child’s behavior – 7 cases (14%)
  - Substance abuse by parents – 6 cases (12%)
  - Sexual abuse – 4 cases (8%)
  - Abandonment – 4 cases (8%)
  - Mental/physical health of parent – 3 cases (6%)
  - Domestic violence in child’s home – 2 cases (4%)
  - Child in juvenile justice system – 2 cases (4%)
  - Mental/physical health of child – 1 case (2%)

- Other – 5 cases (10%)
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, **all** reasons cited for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
  - Substance abuse by parents – 21 cases (42%)
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 18 cases (36%)
  - Child's behavior – 15 cases (30%)
  - Mental/physical health of parent – 13 cases (26%)
  - Domestic violence in child's home – 11 cases (22%)
  - Physical abuse – 9 cases (18%)
  - Abandonment – 7 cases (14%)
  - Sexual abuse – 5 cases (10%)
  - Medical neglect – 5 cases (10%)
  - Child in juvenile justice system – 4 cases (8%)
  - Mental/physical health of child – 4 cases (8%)
  - Substance abuse by child – 2 cases (4%)
- In 17 (68%) of the 25 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in foster care during the entire period under review.

The first section of the report presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State's status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.